FIRST AMERICAN EDITION SERIES

AXA 7

by AVENELL & Romero

THE MOBILE • THE UNMASKED

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by Donne Avenell and Enrique Romero

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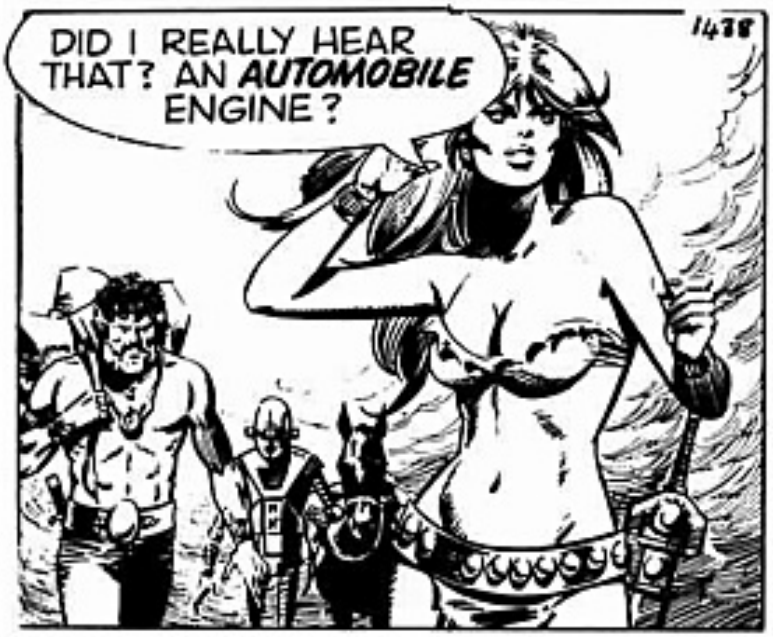
AXA
THE MOBILE
VROOOOOM!
BEYOND THE GREAT PLAIN, LEFT BEHIND AT LAST BY AXA AND HER COMPANIONS, LIES ROCKY DESERT COUNTRY ... WHERE THE PAST IS NOT FORGOTTEN...


1438
DID I REALLY HEAR THAT? AN AUTOMOBILE ENGINE?

WISHFUL THINKING, AXA! CARS ARE A THING OF THE PAST!

I KNOW... A WHOLE CIVILISATION DIED WITH THE INTERNAL COMBUSTION ENGINE...
Rodero

OR DID IT?
1439

SOMETHING LEFT THOSE TYRE TRACKS HERE, RECENTLY
LOOK OUT, AXA!
VRCOOM!
Romero
-VERY RECENTLY!
1440
A NEW VERSION OF AN ANCIENT VEHICLE! THE OLD PEOPLE CALLED IT A SAND BUGGY!
THERE MUST BE PEOPLE AROUND HERE! INGENIOUS PEOPLE, TOO!
YES! ALONG THE RIDGE, A MOB OF THEM!
BUT THEY'RE SILENT, MENACING! WATCHING THAT SAND BUGGY AS IF IT WAS SOMETHING HOSTILE, AND THEY HATED IT!
1442
I WAS RIGHT! THEY'RE AMBUSHING THE BUGGY!
VRAAK!
Romero
AND I'VE BEEN CAUGHT IN THE CROSS-FIRE!
THE BUGGY OVER-TURNED!
BUT WHAT WERE THOSE MISSILES THE AMBUSHERS THREW AT IT? NOT STONES!
1443
PRE-CONTAMINATION MACHINERY! RELICS OF THE OLD PEOPLE!

1444
BUT I'D BETTER HELP THE DRIVER OF THE BUGGY ... IF IT'S NOT TOO LATE...
NO, HE'S NOT DEAD...JUST CONCUSSED...
DID I SAY HE?
A GIRL! LOVELY, TOO!
IS SHE ALL RIGHT?
YES...
AND SHE'S GOING TO STAY THAT WAY!
1445
YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG...
HAVE I?
YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS AMBUSHED THE BUGGY...
WE DIDN'T MEAN TO WRECK IT... OR HURT THE GIRL...
I'LL DO THE TALKING, SON...
IT HAD BETTER BE GOOD... MY SWORD CAN TALK, TOO!
1446
MY PEOPLE NEED THAT BUGGY...WE MEANT TO CAPTURE IT, IT, NOT WRECK IT...
WE'LL TAKE IT BACK TO OUR SETTLEMENT NOW...
AND THE DRIVER?
WE CAN TAKE HER, TOO! LOOK AFTER HER!
NOT UNLESS I KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU...
1447

SO WE'LL ALL GO TO THE SETTLEMENT... YOUR MULE CAN TOW THE BUGGY...
I'LL CARRY THE GIRL...
NO!
SHE'S MY RESPONSIBILITY!
JUST THAT? I WONDER?
OUR SETTLEMENT'S IN THE NEXT VALLEY, ACROSS THE RIDGE...
ROUGH COUNTRY... SCORCHED BY NUCLEAR FIRE STORMS A HUNDRED YEARS AGO...
AND THAT'S WHERE YOU LIVE? WEIRD...
IT'S SHAPED LIKE A WHEEL...
YES... PLANNED AND BUILT THAT WAY BY OUR ANCESTORS, AFTER THE GREAT CONTAMINATION...
WE CALL IT JUNKHEAP...
A STRANGE NAME, TOO...
NOT REALLY... YOU'LL SEE WHY...
AXA IN THE STRANGE DESERT SETTLEMENT...
SO THAT'S WHY YOU CALL IT JUNKHEAP! A TOWN BUILT OF JUNK!
NOT JUST ANY OLD JUNK... THE WRECKAGE OF PRE-CONTAMINATION VEHICLES...
RELICS OF A VANISHED CIVILISATION, WHICH CRYSTALLISED AROUND THE CAR!

THE OLD PEOPLE USED TO MASS-PRODUCE CARS HERE...
THE GUTTED WORKSHOP IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THEIR FACTORY...
NUCLEAR BOMBS DESTROYED IT... WITH THE CARS AND MOST OF THE MEN WHO MADE THEM...
THE SURVIVORS WERE OUR ANCESTORS...
SKIP THE GUIDED TOUR, DAD! THE GIRL'S COMING TO!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I WON'T LET THEM HARM YOU! YOU'VE GOT ONE FRIEND HERE!
I...I THINK SO...
OH, THEY'RE ALL MY FRIENDS IN JUNKHEAP!
TAKE THEM BOTH TO THE LIVING QUARTERS, TED! MAYBE THEY'D FEEL HAPPIER, SHARING A CABIN TOGETHER!
THESE PEOPLE ARE YOUR FRIENDS? AND THEY AMBUSHED YOUR BUGGY?
YOU'RE A STRANGER HERE, AREN'T YOU? I'D BETTER EXPLAIN...
TED AND HIS PEOPLE ARE CALLED THE MECHANICS... THAT'S WHAT THEIR ANCESTORS WERE...
THEY MANNED THE ASSEMBLY LINE IN THE OLD CAR FACTORY... UNSKILLED LABOUR, THOUGH TED WOULD HATE TO HEAR ME SAY SO...

MY OWN PEOPLE ARE DESCENDANTS OF THE ENGINEERS WHO DESIGNED THE CARS AND RAN THE FACTORY, PRE-CONTAMINATION...
THE ELITE, EH? SO AFTER THE NUCLEAR WIPE-OUT, THE SURVIVORS FORMED TWO SEPARATE COMMUNITIES?
RIGHT... THE MECHANICS AND THE AUTOMATORS... THE UNSKILLED AND THE SKILLED...
I DON'T WANT TO SOUND SUPERIOR, AXA, BUT THE MECHANICS ARE PRIMITIVES
WELL I MEAN, LOOK AT THEM NOW...
THEY HOLD THESE QUASI-RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES EVERY NIGHT... CLOCKING ON, THEY CALL IT...
PURE SUPERSTITION, OF COURSE...
THE MEN LEADING THE PROCESSION ARE PRIESTS... SEE WHAT THEY'RE CARRYING?
THE RADIATOR OF AN OLD CAR!
AND A STEERING WHEEL, A GEARBOX, A CARBURETTOR... HOLY RELICS, ACCORDING TO THE MECHANICS...
A WEIRD RELIGIOUS CEREMONY IN THE SETTLEMENT OF JUNK-HEAP...
SYMBOL OF MOBILITY... PIVOT OF AN INDUSTRIAL CIVILISATION SWEPT AWAY BY THE NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST...
THE MECHANICS WORSHIP IT...
THEY'VE ERECTED A HUGE WHEEL IN THE MAIN SQUARE...
COME, STRANGER! PUT YOUR SHOULDER TO THE SACRED WHEEL!

I'M SUPPOSED TO PUSH THAT WHEEL AROUND?
CRAZY! BUT THEN AREN'T ALL RELIGIONS?
EVERY TURN OF THE WHEEL BRINGS THE GREAT IGNITION NEARER!
REDEEM US AND ALL MANKIND, O UNIVERSAL JOINT!
DON'T WORRY, AXA, WE'RE NOT ALL DELUDED BY THAT SUPERSTITIOUS MUMBO-JUMBO...
THAT'S WHY SOME OF US HIJACKED THAT SAND BUGGY...
WE NEED THE BUGGY SO THAT WE CAN STRIP IT DOWN... ANALYSE ITS DESIGN...
MAYBE WE CAN'T CREATE CARS... BUT WE SURE CAN BUILD THEM...
YOU MEAN THE MECHANICS WANT TO BUILD A BUGGY OF THEIR OWN?
NOT JUST ONE BUGGY ...A FLEET OF THEM... WE'RE GOING INTO PRODUCTION!
DAD'S RIGHT! INSTEAD OF JUST WORSHIPPING CARS, THE MECHANICS WILL BUILD THEM!
YOU'RE SCEPTICAL, AUTOMATOR GIRL?
VROOOM!
MY NAME'S JO... AND IT'S NOT THAT... LISTEN!

AUTO ENGINES!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
1464
A FLEET OF VEHICLES! ROARING OUT OF THE DESERT INTO THE SETTLEMENT!
VROOOOOOM!
THE AUTOMATORS ARE ATTACKING JUNKHEAP!
TO RECOVER THEIR STOLEN BUGGY!
Romero
VROOOOM
WE'VE GOT TO STOP THOSE BUGGIES!
WITH A SWORD?
Romero
THEY'RE RUNNING US DOWN!
1465
SCATTER THE PRIMITIVES, MEN
IF THEY FALL UNDER OUR WHEELS... TOO BAD! THEY ARE EXPENDABLE
Romero
HE NEEDS TO CONTROL HIMSELF!
THAT'S ALDO... THE AUTOMATORS CALL HIM THEIR CONTROLLER...
1466
JUNKHEAP UNDER ATTACK BY THE AUTOMATORS...
DRIVE THE MECHANICS OUT OF THE SQUARE. THEN WE'LL FIND THAT VEHICLE THEY STOLE FROM US
WE'VE GOT TO HIDE THE BUGGY! QUICKLY!
ONLY ONE PLACE THAT'S SAFE... RIGHT, DAD?
1467

AREN'T YOU GOING TO HELP US HIDE THE BUGGY, AXA?
IT DOESN'T NEED FOUR TO PUSH IT...
AND OUT THERE, PEOPLE ARE BEING MOWN DOWN BY THOSE COLD-BLOODED AUTOMATORS!
1468
THE CROWD'S FLED... JUST A PRIEST OR TWO, DEFYING THE AUTOMATORS...
NO! SPARE THE SACRED WHEEL!
WHILE WE'RE HERE, MEN, LET'S DESTROY THAT RIDICULOUS TOTEM OF THEIRS
1469
STOP! YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT SACRILEGE!
OH NO! THE POOR OLD FOOL!
AARG!
1470
HE WORSHIPPED THE WHEEL! AND A WHEEL HAS RUN HIM DOWN!
1471
WHAT ARE YOU TURNING FOR, DRIVER? I TOLD YOU TO WRECK THAT TOTEM!
THE OLD PEOPLE DIED THIS WAY IN THEIR THOUSANDS... VICTIMS OF THE CARS THEY IDOLISED...

A LESSON THE OLD PEOPLE NEVER LEARNT ... THE WHEEL SHOULD BE A SERVANT, NEVER A MASTER...
IT'S NOT GOING TO KILL ME!
THE TYRE BURSTS...
HA! DEFLATED, ARE YOU?
PFSSSS!
WE'VE GOT A SPARE IN THE BACK, CONTROLLER...
CHANGE THE WHEEL...
... I'LL DEAL WITH THE WOMAN
YOU WRECKED OUR BUGGY
AND YOU KILLED A HARMLESS OLD MAN. OR DOESN'T THAT CONCERN YOU?
THE OLD MAN GOT IN OUR WAY. IT WAS HIS OWN FAULT IF WE RAN HIM DOWN
BESIDES, HE WAS A MECHANIC. AN OBSOLETE HUMAN BEING
AND THAT GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO KILL HIM? TO PERSECUTE HIS PEOPLE?
AUTOMATOR VEHICLES TERRORISE THE SETTLEMENT OF JUNKHEAP...
THE MECHANICS ARE REDUNDANT. OUR MACHINES HAVE REPLACED THEM. THEY ARE AS USELESS AS THE JUNK THEY HOARD
BUT THEY HAVE FEELINGS! HEARTS THAT NEED A PURPOSE. HANDS THAT ITCH TO WORK!
THAT'S WHY THEY HIJACKED YOUR BUGGY... SO THEY COULD COPY IT AND BUILD VEHICLES OF THEIR OWN...

A VEHICLE OF OURS HAS BEEN STOLEN. WE ARE HERE TO RECOVER IT
I CAN HELP YOU, CONTROLLER...
I KNOW WHERE THESE PEOPLE HAVE HIDDEN THE BUGGY!
JO!
I THOUGHT YOU SYMPATHISED WITH THE MECHANICS...
SO DID I. A PLEASANT SURPRISE
WE'RE READY TO GO, CONTROLLER!
VERY WELL. YOU'LL LEAD US TO THE STOLEN BUGGY, MY DEAR?
YOUR FATHER, MY DEPUTY NIGEL, HAS A SOFT SPOT FOR THESE USELESS MECHANICS. I THOUGHT YOU HAD INHERITED THE DEFECT
DON'T, JO! THE MECHANICS TRUSTED YOU... HOW CAN YOU BETRAY THEM?
I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE THE STOLEN BUGGY IS HIDDEN, CONTROLLER!
SENSIBLE GIRL!
TREACHEROUS GIRL!
BUT SHE'S AN AUTOMATOR HERSELF! WITH A THERMOSTAT IN PLACE OF A HEART!
FOLLOW THE CONTROLLER, MEN!
THE GIRL KNOWS WHERE THE STOLEN VEHICLE IS HIDDEN. SHE WILL LEAD US TO IT
AND I THOUGHT JO WAS THE MECHANICS' FRIEND! HOW WRONG CAN YOU BE?
VERY WRONG, AXA...

BUT JO'S BETRAYED YOU, HASN'T SHE?
NO...
SHE'S DELIBERATELY LEADING THE AUTOMATORS TO THE WRONG PLACE... DECOYING THEM AWAY...
I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE THE BUGGY'S REALLY HIDDEN...
A GOOD PLACE TO HIDE A STOLEN VEHICLE... THIS ASSEMBLY SHOP OF A PRE-CONTAMINATION FACTORY...
YES, THE OLD PEOPLE USED TO MASS-PRODUCE CARS HERE...
AND MAYBE WE'LL BUILD CARS HERE AGAIN, ONE DAY...
BUT I DON'T SEE THE BUGGY...
YOU WILL...
HERE, AXA... PUSH THIS MACHINERY ASIDE...
ME? ALONE?
HUH? IT MUST WEIGH A TON, BUT... IT'S MOVING!
IT PIVOTS ON A BEARING... WE AREN'T CALLED MECHANICS FOR NOTHING...
NOW I SEE WHAT THE MACHINE WAS HIDING... A SECRET RAMP...
IT WAS HERE ORIGINALLY... WE DIDN'T WANT THE AUTOMATORS TO FIND IT...
NOR THIS UNDERGROUND WORKSHOP...

YOU BUILD CARS HERE, IN SECRET?
WE TRY TO... NOT VERY SUCCESSFULLY, AS YOU SEE...
WE'RE CRAFTSMEN, NOT DESIGNERS ...THAT'S WHY WE NEEDED THE AUTOMATORS' BUGGY TO COPY...
BUT LET ME SHOW YOU SOMETHING ELSE... YOUNG TED'S PRIDE AND JOY...
YOUR SON HAS ANOTHER WORKSHOP IN HERE?
A SECRET EVEN FROM SOME OF OUR OWN PEOPLE...
I DON'T BELIEVE IT!
I'VE ONLY SEEN PICTURES OF THEM, IN THE MEMORY BANK AT THE DOME...
A FORMULA ONE RACING CAR ...CIRCA 1980...
THE DESIGN'S A CENTURY OLD, AXA! BUT NOT THE CAR... I BUILT THAT MYSELF!
THE CHASSIS, ENGINE, PARTS ALL CAME FROM THE JUNK-HEAPS...THE SKILL WAS MINE!
FANTASTIC! BUT... DOES IT GO?
OKAY, SO SHE'S JUST A MUSEUM PIECE ...A FIXTURE DOWN HERE, UNDERGROUND...
MIND YOU, ALL SHE NEEDS IS A FEW PERISHABLE PARTS AND PETROL... ...SHE'D GO LIKE A BOMB THEN...
THE AUTOMATORS HAVE GOT TWO CARS LIKE THIS, REAL RELICS...IF I COULD CANNIBALISE ONE OF THEM...
NO WAY!

WON'T THE AUTOMATORS LET TED HAVE THOSE PARTS FOR HIS RACING CAR?
YOU'VE MET THEM... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THEY'VE GOT ALL THE TOOLS WE NEED TO BUILD VEHICLES OURSELVES, IN STORE AT THEIR PLANT...
BUT THEY WANT US TO ROT HERE, WITHOUT TOOLS OR WORK:... PART OF THE JUNK IN JUNKHEAP
1487
SOMEONE CALLING US... ON THE RADIO IN THE STOLEN BUGGY...
ONLY ONE PERSON IT CAN BE...
BEN, IS THAT YOU? JO HERE!
I'M SPEAKING FROM THE PLANT! I'VE PERSUADED THE AUTOMATORS TO GIVE UP THEIR SEARCH FOR THE BUGGY!
SO YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND INSIDE THE PLANT, HAVE YOU?
HOLD IT, JO!
LET ME SPEAK TO HER!
1490
ARE YOU WILLING TO HELP THE MECHANICS, JO? I MEAN, REALLY HELP THEM?
THAT'S WHAT I SAID, JO... UNLOCK ONE OF THE GATES IN THE PERIMETER FENCE OF THE PLANT...
WE CAN FIND OUR OWN WAY TO THE TOOL STORE... TAKE WHAT WE NEED...
1491
A RAID ON THE AUTOMATORS? IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING, AXA?

AXA PLANS A RAID ON THE MECHANICS' OPPRESSORS...
YOU NEED TOOLS, DON'T YOU?
IF THE AUTOMATORS WON'T GIVE THEM TO YOU – WE'LL TAKE THEM!
UNLESS YOU WANT TO RUST AWAY WITH ALL THE OTHER USELESS JUNK IN JUNKHEAP!
1492
A TWO-WAY RADIO WOULD BE USEFUL, TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH JO DURING THE RAID...
SURE TO BE ONE HERE... AMONG THIS DEBRIS FROM THE PAST...
1493
AH!
SCAVENGING, AXA?
1494
OH, MATT! YOU STARTLED ME!
PAST GETTING ON TOP OF YOU, AXA?
YOU DON'T LIKE ME HELPING THE MECHANICS, DO YOU?
I THINK YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME.
WHICH SHOULD BE SPENT MAKING LOVE TO YOU?
IT'S AN IDEA...
1495

TWO DAYS LATER...
WE'VE REPAIRED THE BUGGY, AXA!
SO THE RAID'S ON! TONIGHT!
I THOUGHT I'D TALKED YOU OUT OF THAT, AXA...
I LISTENED...BUT THE MECHANICS NEED MY SWORD, MATT...MORE THAN YOU NEED MY HEART...
MAYBE I SHOULD GO WITH YOU ON THIS RAID, AXA?
NO! IF WERE LUCKY, THERE WON'T BE ANY FIGHTING...
INTO THE PLANT... STEAL THE TOOLS... AND AWAY...
IF YOU'RE LUCKY...
A RAIDING PARTY OF MECHANICS FROM JUNKHEAP, LED BY AXA...
THERE'S THE PLANT...WHERE THE AUTOMATORS TURN OUT THEIR MACHINE-MADE VEHICLES...
WE'LL LEAVE THE BUGGY HERE...ONE OF YOU STAY WITH IT, READY FOR OUR GETAWAY...
THE GATE IN THE PERIMETER FENCE IS UNLOCKED...JO DIDN'T LET US DOWN...
I KNEW JO WAS A FRIEND OF OURS
BUT SHE'S THE ONLY FRIEND WE'VE GOT INSIDE THE PLANT...SO WATCH IT!
THE DOOR OF THE STORE BUILDING IS UNLOCKED, TOO...
THAT GIRL MAY BE AN AUTOMATOR. BUT SHE'S HUMAN...

TOOLS! ALL WE'LL EVER NEED TO SET UP OUR OWN PRODUCTION LINE IN JUNKHEAP!
THE AUTOMATORS HAVE NEVER GIVEN US THE CHANCE TO BUILD CARS OURSELVES! NOW WE'LL JUST TAKE IT!
1500
SELECT THE TOOLS YOU NEED! I'LL KEEP A LOOK-OUT FOR THE GUARDS!
DON'T THE AUTOMATORS PATROL THEIR PLANT AT NIGHT? SEEMS LAX...
UNLESS THEY'VE GOT ELECTRONIC SECURITY...
BLEEP!
1501
BLEEP!
INTRUDER IN THE STORE BLOCK!
RUN FOR THE FENCE, ALL OF YOU! I'LL STAY AND HOLD OFF THE GUARDS!
OH NO! IT WAS AN ALARM CIRCUIT I BROKE!
I'LL STAY WITH YOU, AXA! I HAVEN'T FOUND THE PARTS I NEED FOR MY RACING CAR, ANYWAY!
1502
THEY'RE USING GUNS... BUT THAT'S ONE LESS...
UUH!
1503
LASERS? THE AUTOMATORS ARE MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN I THOUGHT... AND DEADLIER...
LET'S GET THESE TOOLS TO JUNKHEAP, MEN... AND MAKE AXA'S SACRIFICE WORTHWHILE...

AXA AT BAY IN THE AUTO-MATORS' PLANT...
GNK!
I'M NOT GIVING IN WITHOUT A FIGHT...
BEHIND YOU, AXA!
OHH!
UUH!
IS SHE... DEAD?
THE LASER BEAM HIT HER SWORD BLADE... ONLY STUNNED, MAYBE...
IT MATTERS, DAMN YOU...
SHE'S BREATHING... BUT UNCONSCIOUS...
ALIVE, ANYWAY... SO SHE'S A PROBLEM FOR SECURITY, NOT DISPOSAL...
TAKE THEM TO THE CELLS!
INTO THE ELEVATOR...
WE'RE GOING UP?
DOWN... UNDERGROUND, WHERE THE EXECUTIVES WHO BUILT THE PLANT HID OUT DURING THE NUCLEAR WARS...
OUR GUARDS TALK TOO MUCH...
NO MATTER ...IF THE LISTENERS ARE NOT DESTINED TO LIVE MUCH LONGER...

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
UP TO THE EXECUTIVES...
YOU CAN'T KILL THEM, ALDO!
THEY'RE DEFECTIVE MATERIAL... CALL IT JUNKING THEM...
UUH...
AXA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HOLD IT! SOMEONE COMING!
STIFF... SORE...
YOU WERE TALKING?
TRYING TO REVIVE AXA... BUT SHE'S UNCONSCIOUS STILL...
A PITY... I HAD QUESTIONS TO ASK HER... BUT YOU CAN GIVE ME SOME ANSWERS...
WHY DID YOU RAID THE PLANT?
WE NEED TOOLS!
WE COULD MAKE CARS OURSELVES, IF ONLY YOU AUTOMATORS WOULD LET US!
A WASTE OF EFFORT... WE'RE LIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY... MACHINES HAVE SUPERSEDED MEN...
BESIDES, YOU MECHANICS ARE USELESS!
NO!
I'VE BUILT A RACING CAR WITH MY OWN HANDS! AS GOOD AS THE VINTAGE TYPES YOU HAVE IN YOUR MUSEUM HERE!
REMARKABLE! AND THIS CAR IS FUNCTIONAL?
IT COULD BE, WITH A COUPLE OF PARTS AND SOME FUEL!

PERHAPS I'VE UNDERESTIMATED YOU...
YOU HAVE!
HE MIGHT HAVE CHANGED HIS MIND ABOUT US, AXA...
LET HIM SLEEP ON IT, THEN!
I DON'T LIKE PEOPLE WHO LOCK ME UP... AND SPY ON ME...
AXA'S ESCAPING, FATHER!
A GIRL OF SPIRIT... JUST WHAT THE MECHANICS NEEDED...
I'M NOT MAD ABOUT MACHINES, EITHER!
NOW WHAT, AXA?
WE ESCAPE... WITH NOBODY MONITORING US ON CLOSED-CIRCUIT TELEVISION...
HOW DO WE FIND OUR WAY OUT OF THIS UNDERGROUND MAZE?
EVER HEARD OF LUCK?
THERE YOU ARE! TRANSPORT!
THIS RAIL-TRACK MUST LINK UP WITH SOME VITAL PART OF THE PLANT...
I NEVER REALISED HOW BIG IT WAS... HOW POWERFUL THE AUTOMATORS ARE...
THEY'RE ONLY AS POWERFUL AS THEIR MACHINES, TED...

AXA AND THE YOUNG MECHANIC ESCAPING FROM THE PLANT...
INTO THE ELEVATOR... QUICKLY!
AT LEAST WE'RE GOING UP!
BUT WHERE TO?
1516
WHAT'S THE HUB OF AN AUTOMATED CAR FACTORY? WE'VE FOUND IT!
THE MAIN WORKSHOP OF THE PLANT... WHERE PRODUCTION LINES ARE TURNING OUT NEW VEHICLES...
AT LEAST MACHINES CAN'T TALK... AND THERE'S NO MEN AROUND TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON US...
1517
HEY!
EVEN MACHINES NEED SUPERVISORS...
THE INTRUDERS ARE HERE! IN THE MAIN WORKSHOP!
HE'S ALERTING THE SECURITY GUARDS!
WE'VE GOT TO CREATE A DIVERSION...
1518
AND THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO DO THAT...
1519
CROINNGE!
PRESS A FEW BUTTONS AT RANDOM ON A CONTROL PANEL, AND WHAT HAVE YOU GOT?
CHAOS!
THE PRODUCTION LINE IS GOING BERSERK!
KRAANG!
AND IF I KNOW THE AUTOMATORS AND THEIR TIDY LITTLE MINDS, THEY'LL BE TOO PANICSTRICKEN TO WORRY ABOUT A COUPLE OF INTRUDERS!

COME ON! WE'LL LOOK FOR A WAY OUT!
KLANG!
YOU CERTAINLY SCREWED UP THAT ASSEMBLY LINE, AXA...
BUT WE'VE STILL GOT TO ESCAPE FROM THE PLANT...
STOP!
1620
AAH!
POOR DEVILS... THEY MAY HAVE BEEN GUNNING FOR US, BUT I DIDN'T WISH THEM ANY HARM...
WE COULD HAVE USED THAT VEHICLE TO ESCAPE IN, TOO...
YOU WANT TRANSPORT? WE'VE COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE, THEN...
1621
A MUSEUM OF PRE-CONTAMINATION CARS...
AREN'T THEY TERRIFIC?
FASCINATING...
BUT IF THE AUTO-MATORS CATCH US HERE, WE'LL BECOME MUSEUM PIECES OURSELVES!
1622
WE HAVE TO ESCAPE FROM THIS PLACE... FAST...
I AGREE...
HUH?
THEY DON'T COME ANY FASTER THAN THIS FORMULA ONE RACING CAR, VINTAGE 1983!
VRMMM!
1623

THERE'S THE GIRL! IN THE MUSEUM!
GUARDS, TED...
VROOM!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THEM! JUMP ABOARD!
1624
NO ROOM FOR TWO IN THAT COCKPIT...
1
CAN YOU HANG ON THERE, AXA?
I'LL HAVE TO...
HEY!
I CALL THIS ESCAPING IN STYLE!
1625
NOW YOU KNOW WHY I WORSHIP THESE CARS... AND THE OLD PEOPLE WHO DESIGNED AND BUILT THEM...
VROOOOM!
WE STILL HAVE TO GET THROUGH THAT CONTROL-POINT...
WE MUST STOP THEM, JO... THE GIRL HIT ALDO...
1626
I'VE OFTEN WANTED TO HIT ALDO MYSELF!
YOU'RE LETTING THEM ESCAPE, JO?
THEY'RE FRIENDS OF MINE, REMEMBER?
1627
BLESS YOU, JO!
THE CONTROLLER'S NOT GOING TO LIKE THIS...

AXA AND TED SPEED TOWARDS JUNKHEAP IN THE STOLEN RACING CAR...
THE MECHANICS SHOULD GIVE US A GREAT WELCOME...

IT'S A VINTAGE FORMULA ONE CAR... FROM THE MUSEUM AT THE PLANT...
I TOLD YOU TO EXPECT A REPRISAL BY THE AUTOMATORS...

1525
WELL, IF THEY'RE LOOKING FOR TROUBLE, THEY'LL GET IT...

1529
OH NO... I'VE JUST HAD A NASTY THOUGHT...

THE MECHANICS DON'T KNOW WE'VE STOLEN THIS CAR... THEY MIGHT HAVE SET AN AMBUSH FOR THE AUTOMATORS...

PHSSSS!

AAH!

TED! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

1530
MY SON? TRAPPED IN THE CAR? HELL!

DON'T FLAP, DAD...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE AUTOMATORS! HOW COULD I KNOW YOU'D STOLEN THE CAR!

MY LEG'S BROKEN... NO OTHER DAMAGE...
EXCEPT TO THE CAR...

1531
I WAS GOING TO CANNIBALISE IT ANYWAY... USE THE PARTS TO COMPLETE MY OWN CAR...

A FEW DAYS LATER...
THAT RAID OF YOURS ON THE PLANT WAS A WASTE OF TIME, AXA...
WHAT HAVE THE MECHANICS GAINED? A FEW TOOLS AND ANOTHER HEAP OF JUNK...
1532
WRONG, MATT... THEY'VE GAINED SELF-RESPECT...
1533
BESIDES, YOUNG TED HAS CANNIBALISED THE WRECKED CAR... THE PARTS WERE JUST WHAT HE NEEDED...
AXA!
THIS YOU HAVE TO SEE!
THE MECHANICS' SPECIAL! BUILT BY TED! PUT ON THE ROAD BY AXA!
12
THE MECHANICS HAVE BUILT THEIR OWN VINTAGE RACING CAR...
HOW ABOUT THAT, AXA?
12
WONDERFUL, TED! CONGRATULATIONS!
BUT IT WON'T HELP YOU TO MASS-PRODUCE BUGGIES... JUNKHEAP WILL STAY A JUNKHEAP..
1534
SHUT UP, MATT!
NO, HE'S RIGHT... TED'S A GENIUS, BUT HE CAN'T CREATE AN INDUSTRY ON HIS OWN...
OUR PEOPLE WILL NEVER FIND WORK... OR SELF-RESPECT... WITHOUT THE HELP OF THE AUTOMATORS...
1535
TALK OF THE DEVIL...

A DEPUTATION OF AUTOMATORS FROM THE PLANT...
AND JO WAVING TO US... SO THEY COME IN PEACE...
TWO PRODUCTION BUGGIES ESCORTING THEIR VINTAGE FORMULA ONE RACING CAR...

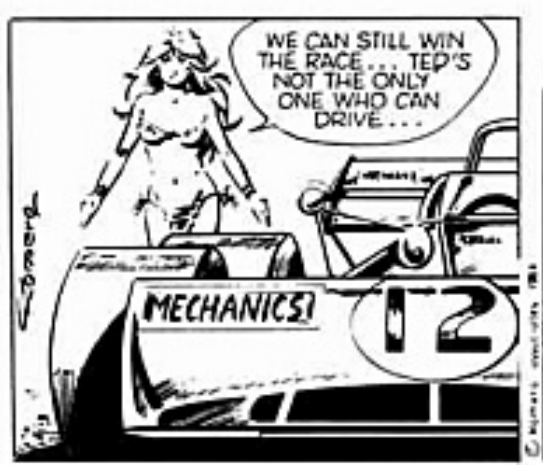
MAYBE OUR RAID ON THE PLANT HAS GOT RESULTS?
1536

WE'VE COME TO MAKE THE MECHANICS AN OFFER...

YOU'VE BUILT YOUR OWN FORMULA ONE RACING CAR ... PROOF OF YOUR TECHNICAL SKILL...
1537
BUT ONLY IF THE CAR FUNCTIONS ADEQUATELY... AND THE ONLY WAY TO TEST THAT IS TO RACE IT AGAINST OURS...

A RACE? ALDO IN HIS VINTAGE CAR, AGAINST TED DRIVING HIS HOMEMADE MODEL? WHY NOT?
1538

THIS IS WHY NOT! I BROKE MY LEG, REMEMBER?
A PITY... IF YOU'D WON THE RACE, WE PROPOSED TO SET UP A PRODUCTION-LINE HERE IN JUNKHEAP...


WE CAN STILL WIN THE RACE... TED'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN DRIVE...
MECHANICS!
12

YOU, AXA? HANDLE A FORMULA ONE RACING CAR? CRAZY!

1539
YOU THINK SO? WATCH THIS...

AXA BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE MECHANICS' SPECIAL...
VROOOM!
MECHANICS
SHE MUST HAVE STUDIED DRIVING TECHNIQUES IN THE DOME...
AND SHE WATCHED ME HANDLE THE CAR ON THE WAY FROM THE PLANT...
1540
SO? MY OPPONENT IS A GIRL?
VERY WELL... WE SHALL RACE OUT OF JUNKHEAP, AROUND THE ROCK SPIRE IN THE DESERT, AND BACK HERE TO THE FINISH...
DON'T UNDER-ESTIMATE ME, CONTROLLER... OR THE CAR...
I'LL HELP YOU CHANGE, AXA...
YOU'RE ALL CRAZY!
1541
AXA! YOU CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS!
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE... HELL, LOOK AT YOU!
1542
MY BODY MAY BE SOFT, MATT... BUT MY SPIRIT'S NOT!
SOMEONE'S GOT TO DRIVE THAT RACE FOR THE MECHANICS...
IT'LL GAIN THEM WORK... SUPPORT FROM THE AUTOMATORS... NEW INDUSTRY FOR JUNKHEAP...
MECHANICS
IF YOU WIN, GIRL.
1543

A HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE CIVILISATION THAT PRODUCED THEM ... A RACE BETWEEN FORMULA ONE CARS...
VROOOOM!
AXA'S GOT HER WORK CUT OUT... IN A HOMEMADE CAR, AGAINST THAT WORKS MODEL OF THE AUTOMATORS, WITH THEIR CONTROLLER DRIVING IT...
THEY'RE OFF!
I'VE GOT THE CAR TO BEAT ALDO'S, THANKS TO THE MECHANICS... BUT HAVE I THE NERVE AND SKILL?
1544

WATCH YOUR LINE, AXA...
ALDO'S TAKING HER ON THE INSIDE...

VROOOOM!
16
12
UNDER MY HANDS AND FEET... SUCH POWER! CAN I CONTROL IT?
1545

ALDO'S CERTAIN HE'LL WIN... HE'D NEVER HAVE AGREED TO THIS RACE OTHERWISE...
12

1546
HE'D DO ANYTHING TO KEEP THE MECHANICS IDLE AND UNPRODUCTIVE ... SO HE CAN GO ON DESPISING THEM...

SHE'S GAINING ON ME... MUST DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT...

I DON'T TRUST ALDO... BUT HE CAN'T PLAY ANY TRICKS, OUT HERE IN THE DESERT...

YOU'RE GETTING TOO CLOSE, AXA...

1547
KRAAK!
THIS WILL SLOW YOU DOWN...

ALDO FIRED A LASER-BEAM AT THE ROCK SPIRE... STARTED AN AVALANCHE...
UUH!
1548
HE'S DETERMINED TO WIN THIS RACE... EVEN IF IT KILLS ME!
ROCK DEBRIS EVERYWHERE ...GOT TO AVOID IT...
THE OLD PEOPLE BUILT THIS KIND OF OBSTACLE INTO THEIR RACE TRACKS ...CALLED THEM CHICANES!
ANYTHING THEY COULD DO...
1549
PITY I HAD TO STOP THE GIRL... BUT I COULDN'T RISK LOSING THE RACE...
HUH? SHE'S STILL MOBILE?
1550
TAKE A GOOD LOOK, ALDO! SOON ALL YOU'LL SEE IS MY DUST!
HALF A MILE TO THE FINISH... AND THE CRUNCH FOR THE MECHANICS...
A NEW LIFE FOR THEM IF I WIN... AND IF I LOSE, FINAL FRUSTRATION...
1551
SO I JUST HAVE TO WIN, DON'T I?

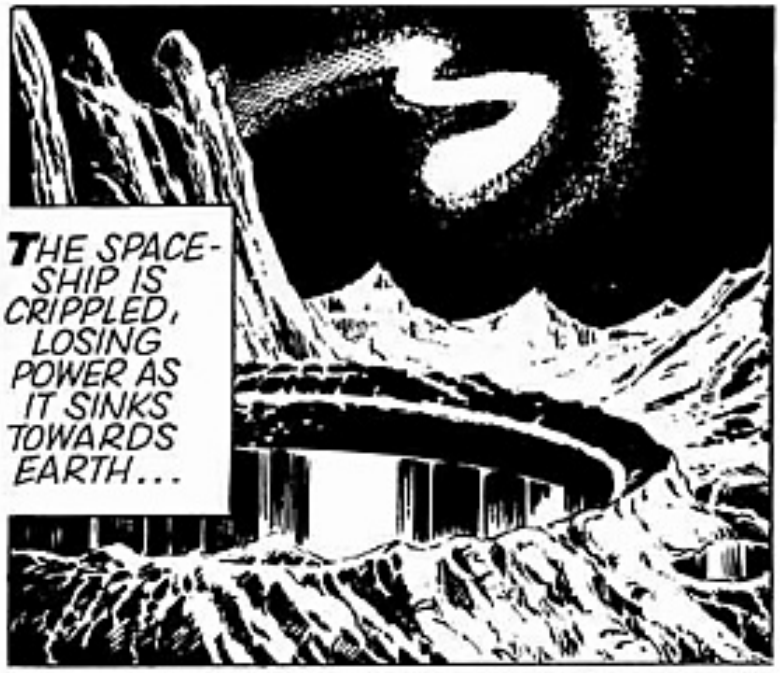
HELL! NO GIRL'S GOING TO BEAT ME!
HER CAR'S GOT THE SPEED... BUT SHE WON'T HAVE THE NERVE TO USE IT...
ALDO'S CROWDING AXA AT THE LAST BEND...
IF SHE BRAKES, HE'S WON...
YOU DON'T SCARE ME, ALDO!
ALDO'S CAR SKIDS OUT OF CONTROL...
NO!
KRAANG!
AAH!
POOR DEVIL... BUT IF HE HADN'T TRIED TO RAM ME, HE WOULDN'T HAVE SKIDDED...
WRROUM!
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO END THAT WAY...
YOU'VE WON, AXA!
BUT ALDO'S DEAD...
YOU'D BEATEN HIM ALREADY... AND HE COULDN'T HAVE LIVED WITH THAT...
IT'S NOT ONLY THE RACE YOU'VE WON, AXA BUT A BETTER LIFE FOR THE MECHANICS...
NOW ALDO'S DEAD, I'M CONTROLLER OF THE AUTOMATORS ...AND I'LL KEEP MY PROMISE...
WE'LL SET UP A PRODUCTION LINE IN JUNKHEAP ...TO MAKE QUALITY CARS, LIKE TED'S RACER...

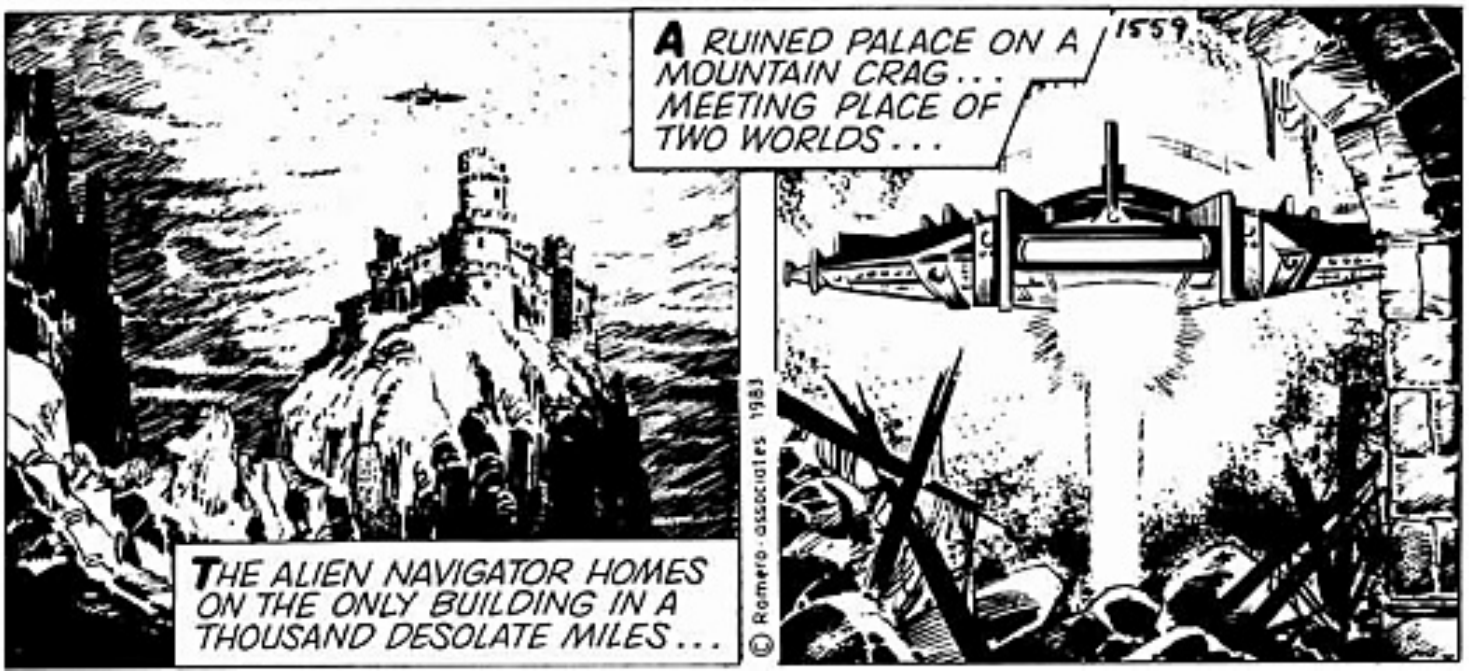
I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY, AXA...
YOU HAVEN'T GOT TO SAY IT, MATT...
HE DOESN'T NEED WORDS FOR THAT, GIRL... BUT I DO...
WHEN YOU CAME TO JUNKHEAP, YOU MADE A LOT OF PEOPLE HAPPY...
1976

A FEW DAYS LATER...
A PITY YOU WON'T STAY, AXA... AND SEE JUNKHEAP TURNED INTO A CENTRE OF INDUSTRY...
WE COULD HAVE PRESENTED YOU WITH THE FIRST CAR TO ROLL OFF OUR NEW PRODUCTION LINE...
1977
THIS BUGGY OF THE AUTOMATORS WILL TAKE ME WHERE I WANT TO GO... OVER THE NEXT HORIZON...

AXA
THE UNMASKED
A GIRL WITH A SWORD, CHALLENGING THE FUTURE... IN A RUINED WORLD, STRUGGLING TO RENEW ITSELF.....
...BUT AXA'S IS NOT THE ONLY WORLD IN THE UNIVERSE...

THROUGH THE POISONOUS GASES THAT STILL CONTAMINATE THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE LIMPS AN ALIEN SPACESHIP...


THE SPACE-SHIP IS CRIPPLED, LOSING POWER AS IT SINKS TOWARDS EARTH...


A RUINED PALACE ON A MOUNTAIN CRAG... MEETING PLACE OF TWO WORLDS...
1559
THE ALIEN NAVIGATOR HOMES ON THE ONLY BUILDING IN A THOUSAND DESOLATE MILES...
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THERE ARE HUMANS LIVING IN THE RUINS OF THE PALACE . . .
THEY EMERGE FROM CLOISTER AND ARCH TO STARE IN WONDER AT THE ALIEN SPACESHIP . . .
VISITORS? FROM ANOTHER PLANET?
. . . . THE HULL'S RED-HOT . . .
A SHIP FROM SPACE! IT MUST BE!
WE'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES INTERESTED, VIKTOR . . .
ALIENS? OUTCASTS? THEN THEY'VE SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH US!
IGNORE THE GROTS . . . THIS SPACESHIP IS NO CONCERN OF THEIRS . . .
IT CONCERNS EVERYONE WHO LIVES ON EARTH, VIKTOR . . .
LIKE THE STRANGERS ON THE MOUNTAIN-SIDE BELOW!
I TELL YOU I SAW A FLYING MACHINE!
UNLIKELY, AXA . . .
I'M SURE I SAW IT! A SPACESHIP LANDING IN THAT RUINED PALACE ON THE CRAG!
ROBOT MARK'S STAYING WITH THE BUGGY . . . HE DOESN'T BELIEVE YOU, EITHER . . .
THEN YOU'RE BOTH WRONG, AREN'T YOU?

A SPACESHIP IN THE COURTYARD OF A RUINED PALACE...
NOW DO YOU BELIEVE ME?
INCREDIBLE!
WHY? DO YOU THINK WE'RE THE ONLY LIVING THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE?
1564
MORE LIVING THINGS, AXA... BEHIND YOU...
AXA MEETS THE INHABITANTS OF THE RUINED PALACE IN WHICH THE ALIEN SPACESHIP HAS LANDED...
WELCOME, STRANGERS!
AT LEAST THESE PEOPLE ARE HUMAN BEINGS... AND FRIENDLY...
1565
BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE!
IT REALLY IS A SPACESHIP? FROM ANOTHER PLANET?
APPARENTLY...
THE HULL'S RED-HOT... NO WAY OF FINDING OUT TILL IT COOLS...
1566
BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M MORE INTERESTED IN YOU...
YOUR FACE AND BODY... SO PERFECT... SO LOVELY...
WARM, TOO! REAL SKIN, REAL FLESH!
1567
WHY SHOULDN'T IT BE REAL?

FORGIVE ME... YOU'LL NEED FOOD AND REST...
I NEED ANSWERS MORE...
1569
THE SPACESHIP WILL TAKE HOURS TO COOL... TIME TO SPARE...
I WASN'T TALKING ABOUT THE SPACESHIP...
YOU'RE CURIOUS ABOUT ME AND MY PEOPLE?
YES...
WHY DO YOU LIVE IN THE CELLARS UNDER THE PALACE, FOR INSTANCE?
YOU THINK IT'S DARK AND GLOOMY DOWN HERE? THEN LOOK...
1569
IN THE DARK CELLARS BENEATH THE RUINED PALACE...
SUNLIGHT ON FALLING WATER... GREENERY AND FLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES ... A WONDERLAND!
YES... REFRESHMENT FOR THE EYES AND THE SOUL...
1570
BUT IT'S AN ILLUSION!
ALL BEAUTY IS AN ILLUSION...
AH, WORDS!
BUT THESE LEAVES AND FLOWERS ARE PAINTED ON A CURTAIN! THE WORD FOR THEM IS FAKES!
THE WATER'S REAL, FROM A BROKEN CONDUIT... WE CREATED THE FANTASY SCENE AROUND IT...
1571

MY PEOPLE ARE OBSESSED BY BEAUTY ...SO IN THIS IMPERFECT WORLD WE CREATE OUR OWN...
A SOUTH SEA PARADISE ...IN THE DAMP CELLARS OF A MOULDERING RUIN! I MUST ADMIT IT'S MAGICAL!
IF THE EYE ACCEPTS IT, THEN MAGIC BECOMES REALITY...
IT DOES LOOK REAL... UNTIL YOU OPEN A DOOR IN THE MOONLIT SEA!
ARE YOU REAL, I WONDER? OR JUST ANOTHER ILLUSION?
AH...
COME AND LOOK AT THE WORKSHOP WHERE WE CREATE OUR FANTASIES...
WE CALL OURSELVES THE MORPHOS... FROM THE WORD FOR FORM, COINED BY AN OLD PEOPLE OF ANTIQUITY...
OUR ANCESTORS TOOK REFUGE IN THIS RUINED PALACE, FROM A WORLD MADE UGLY BY NUCLEAR DISASTER...
HERE WE CREATE OUR OWN ILLUSION OF BEAUTY, AND FASHION IT INTO REALITY...
IT'S LIKE WALKING THROUGH A DREAM!
AND WHAT FANTASIES DO YOU MORPHOS CREATE IN HERE?
DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR, AXA!

STOP, AXA!
OH!
A FORBIDDEN DOOR, IN THE SUBTERRANEAN WONDERLAND OF THE MORPHOS...
YOUR HAND! IT'S ICY COLD!
TRUST ME, PLEASE... THERE ARE SOME THINGS IT'S BETTER FOR YOU NOT TO KNOW...
1976
ALL RIGHT, VIKTOR... I TRUST YOU...
YOUR OWN ROOM, WHILE YOU STAY WITH THE MORPHOS...
NOT JUST A ROOM! A MAGIC CHAMBER!
AND THROUGH THE WINDOWS A HEAVENLY SKY, AS THE OLD PEOPLE USED TO SEE IT, BEFORE THE FOG OF CONTAMINATION BLOTTED OUT THE STARS!
YOU'RE KIDDING YOURSELF, AXA! OR LETTING THE MORPHOS KID YOU!
YOUR STARRY SKY IS JUST SILVER PAINT! A FAKE!
AH... BUT THE BED'S REAL...
1978
EARLY NEXT MORNING...
MATT'S ASLEEP STILL... AND I WON'T WAKE HIM...
I'LL ENJOY THE ILLUSION STILL... DAWN SUNLIGHT STREAMING IN AT THE WINDOWS...
SUNLIGHT
MOONLIGHT
NOON DAY
TWILIGHT
EVEN THOUGH THIS ROOM IS BURIED IN THE DARK EARTH, UNDER A RUINED PALACE...
1979

BUT LET'S SEE WHAT OTHER FANTASIES THE MORPHOS HAVE CREATED...
THE DOOR VIKTOR FORBADE ME TO OPEN... IRRESISITIBLE TO ANY WOMAN...
EMPTY, BUT FOR A BUNCH OF MORPHOS ...STANDING WITH THEIR BACKS TO ME...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK TO ME? OR MOVE?
KREAK!
OH...NO...
IT'S NOT A GIRL AT ALL! JUST A MASK ... AND A WIG!
AND THESE AREN'T MORPHOS ... ONLY THE HOLLOW SHELLS THEY LIVE INSIDE...
I WARNED YOU, AXA...
I'M STILL TRYING TO UNDERSTAND, VIKTOR... IT'S BEEN A SHOCK...
THE MORPHOS WEAR MASKS LIKE THIS? ALL THE TIME? EVEN YOU?
AND IT'S NOT JUST YOUR FACES YOU HIDE, BUT YOUR BODIES TOO...THAT'S WHY YOUR HAND IS SO COLD...

WHY, VIKTOR? WHY DO YOU MORPHOS LIVE BEHIND MASKS?
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO HIDE?
YOU ASK HARD QUESTIONS, AXA...
BUT MAYBE I WON'T HAVE TO ANSWER THEM YET...
TROUBLE, VIKTOR!
THE GROTS ARE ATTACKING THE ALIEN SPACESHIP IN THE COURTYARD!
I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN THE SPACESHIP... SO MANY OTHER STRANGE THINGS TO THINK ABOUT...
LIKE VIKTOR'S HANDSOME FACE... OR RATHER, HIS MASK...
WHO ARE THESE GROTS?
HUMAN VERMIN... SCAVENGERS...
THEY INFEST THE RUINED PALACE... LIVING LIKE RATS ON THE WASTE FOOD AND SCRAPS WE THROW THEM...
SOMETIMES THEY SHOW THEIR TEETH... THE WAY THEY'RE ATTACKING THE SPACESHIP NOW, TO VANDALISE IT...
CHASE THOSE GROTS AWAY FROM THE SPACESHIP, MORPHOS! DRIVE THEM BACK INTO THEIR RAT-HOLES!
TO HEAR VIKTOR SPEAK, YOU'D THINK THE GROTS WEREN'T HUMAN...
MAYBE HE'S RIGHT!

DID THE GROT TOUCH YOU, AXA?
NO... I WAS JUST HORRIFIED TO THINK HE MIGHT...
BUT WHY DID I FEEL THAT? SUCH REVULSION... DISGUST...
UNDERSTANDABLE...
TAKE A LOOK INSIDE THE RUINED PALACE, WHERE THE VERMIN LIVE...

A NOBLE RUIN! WHAT WAS THIS PALACE?
BEFORE THE GREAT CONTAMINATION? THE SUMMER PALACE OF SOME ANCIENT PRINCE, PERHAPS... OR THE FOLLY OF AN INDUSTRIAL TYCOON...
THEY CALLED IT THE HERMITAGE...
A GOOD NAME... IT GAVE SHELTER TO OUR MORPHO ANCESTORS...
AND TO THE OUTCAST GROTS...

THE ONLY THING WE SHARE WITH THE GROTS IS THIS PALACE!
BUT YOU BOTH REACT VIOLENTLY TO BEAUTY... THE MORPHOS WITH LOVE... AND THE GROTS WITH HATE!
SHE'S RIGHT, DAMN HER!

NO! KEEP AWAY FROM ME!
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF! WE GROTS HATE BEAUTY! AND YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL!
MANIAC!

YOU WANTED TO DESTROY ME? BECAUSE I'M BEAUTIFUL? WHAT KIND OF MAN ARE YOU?
OH NO... I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED...
... A MUTANT...
1992
BUT THIS PALACE IS NOT THE ONLY THING WE GROTS SHARE WITH THE MORPHOS... IS IT, VIKTOR?
SO I'M A MUTANT! DEFORMED, GROTESQUE!
WHAT DID HE MEAN?
1993
DON'T TURN AWAY, VIKTOR! ANSWER ME!
WHAT COULD YOU BEAUTIFUL MORPHOS HAVE IN COMMON WITH THOSE DEFORMED AND HIDEOUS GROTS?
WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT LATER... IF WE HAVE TO...
1994
THE ALIEN SPACESHIP! WE HEARD SOUNDS COMING FROM IT!
SO THE MEN INSIDE THERE ARE ALIVE...
DID YOU SAY MEN? WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY ARE?
THEY CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE, DIDN'T THEY? THIS RUINED PALACE, HERMITAGE FOR MORPHOS AND GROTS... DEVIANTS FROM THE HUMAN RACE
1995

THE HULL OF THE SPACESHIP HAS COOLED... NOW WE CAN GET INSIDE...
STOP, AXA! THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS...
DON'T TEMPT HER!
1596
I LIKE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS... AND I DON'T LIKE WAITING FOR THEM...
KLANG!
BUT THE METAL HULL IS SEAMLESS ...NO SIGN OF A DOOR...
IT'S A SPACESHIP, AXA... NOT ONE OF THOSE TIN CANS OF THE OLD PEOPLE TO BE OPENED WITH A SWORD...
1597
NO?
SOMETHING INSIDE THE SPACESHIP MUST HAVE OPENED THAT DOOR...
SO IT WANTS US TO ENTER...
EVERYONE ELSE STAY OUT HERE IN THE COURTYARD...
1598
THE THINGS IN THERE COULD BE HOSTILE, AXA...
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT...
AXA ENTERS THE ALIEN SPACESHIP...
IT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD...
EMPTY... UNMANNED...
YOU MEAN IT WAS... BEFORE IT SET OUT ON ITS VOYAGE THROUGH SPACE... BUT NOW IT'S ARRIVED—A MACHINE FROM ANOTHER PLANET...
NOT A SOUL ON BOARD...
1599

WRONG!
HUH?
WHO SAID THAT?
I DID. SPACEFLIGHT COMMANDER. MY SHIP IS NOT UNMANNED
A METALLIC VOICE...
THE VOICE CAME FROM THAT CENTRAL BLOCK ON THE LOWER DECK...
HUMAN SPEECH PATTERNS HAVE FULLY YET TO BE ANALYSED. PERHAPS UNMANNED THE CORRECT WORD IS NOT
1601
I AM NO MAN. YOU WOULD CALL ME AN ALIEN.
MY CREW HAS DISINTEGRATED. THE SOLE SURVIVOR I AM
MY SPACESHIP IS A PROBE... ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS ON EARTH SENT TO MONITOR FOLLOWING YOUR NUCLEAR DISASTER A CENTURY AGO...
1602
INVESTIGATION WE DELAYED FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS, FEARING DAMAGE TO OUR OWN VULNERABLE ORGANISMS. A MISCALCULATION
WHERE ARE YOU GOING, AXA?
HE SAID HIS CREW HAD DISINTEGRATED ... BUT THEY MUST HAVE HAD BODIES...
1603
THE ATOMIC DUST THAT STILL CONTAMINATES EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE PENETRATED MY SPACESHIP... INFECTING ALL MY COMPANIONS...
THEY DIED AT THEIR OPERATIONAL STATIONS...
HERE? THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT OF ONE OF THEM?

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND, AXA?
THEY LOOK LIKE TENDRILS AND LEAVES... WITHERED ONES...
AND A KIND OF... ROOT...
1604
THE ALIENS... AND THE ONE STILL ALIVE IN HIS COMMAND CENTRE... MUST BE PLANTS...
THAT ROOT IS AN ALIEN?
A DEAD ONE... OR ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HIM
THE ONE ALIVE IN THERE MAY BE A PLANT... BUT INTELLECTUALLY HE'S LIGHT YEARS AHEAD OF US...
1605
BUT NOW I AM ALONE, AND ISOLATED. I NEED HELP
THE ALIEN COMMUNICATES WITH AXA AND VIKTOR...
MY SPACE-SHIP IS DAMAGED
ITS POWER-PACK IS STILL FUNCTIONAL, BUT CONDUCTION CIRCUITS HAVE OVERHEATED
1606
HE'S ANALYSED HUMAN SPEECH PATTERNS PRETTY WELL...
I CANNOT LEAVE THIS SEALED CONTROL CENTRE, OR I SHALL DISINTEGRATE
BUT I COULD DIRECT OPERATIONS FROM HERE. ...IF I HAD ASSISTANTS WITH THE MEANS AND SKILL TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE...
1607
YOU WANT US TO HELP YOU?

WE ARE OF DIFFERENT WORLDS. I AM AN ALIEN. BUT YES, I WANT YOUR HELP
YOU'VE GOT IT! WE HAVE THE MEANS AND THE SKILL TO REPAIR YOUR DAMAGED SPACESHIP!
THE GOODWILL, TOO...
I'M A MORPHO... I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE AN ALIEN...
YOU SAID THAT FROM THE HEART, VIKTOR...
MY PROMISE TO HELP THE ALIEN?
NOT JUST THAT... YOUR CERTAINTY THAT YOU KNEW HOW HE FELT...
OH, VIKTOR! YOU'RE SO UNHAPPY, AREN'T YOU? SO LONELY?
IF YOU'RE GOING TO KISS ME, AXA... LET'S HAVE AN APPROPRIATE SETTING...
MOONLIGHT AND ROSES... YOU THINK OF EVERYTHING, VIKTOR...
BUT YOUR LIPS ARE COLD! AN ILLUSION, TOO!
AND I'M BORED WITH ILLUSIONS... INSTANT ROMANCE, AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON...
EVEN THAT HANDSOME FACE OF YOURS IS A MASK, ISN'T IT?
NO, AXA! DON'T TRY TO TAKE IT OFF!

OH!
AXA, I'M SORRY!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU!
NO... IT WAS PANIC, WASN'T IT?
1612
YOU COULDN'T BEAR ME TO SEE WHAT'S UNDER THAT MASK... YOUR REAL FACE...
NOW I KNOW WHAT THE GROT MEANT... WHEN HE SAID THAT YOU AND HE SHARED MORE THAN JUST THIS PALACE...
1613
YOU'RE A MUTANT TOO, AREN'T YOU, VIKTOR?
YOUR LEG'S BLEEDING, AXA... IF YOU STAY HERE, YOU'LL GET IT INFECTED...
1614
SO THE MORPHOS ARE MUTANTS... UNDER THOSE PRETTY MASKS OF THEIRS...
GUESS THEY WEAR SOME KIND OF FAKE SKIN AS WELL... TO HIDE THEIR UGLY BODIES...
DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, MATT! HOLD ME TIGHT!
THE MORPHOS ARE REPAIRING THE DAMAGED SPACESHIP IN THE PALACE COURTYARD...
IT'S A WEIRD SET-UP, AXA... A BUNCH OF MUTANTS LIVING IN THIS RUIN IN THE MOUNTAINS... AND AN ALIEN FROM ANOTHER PLANET THROWING HIMSELF ON THEIR MERCY...
HE'S A MUTANT HIMSELF, IN ONE WAY...
THEY'RE ALL OUTCASTS FROM THE WORLD THEY BELONG TO... THE ALIEN, THE MORPHOS AND THE GROTS...
1615

CAN I HELP IN ANY WAY?
AXA! YOU'RE NOT ANGRY WITH ME?
I WAS IN THE WRONG, VIKTOR, NOT YOU... BUT DON'T LET'S TALK ABOUT IT...
WE CAN HANDLE THE REPAIRS, ALL RIGHT... BUT IT WOULD SPEED THINGS UP IF WE HAD A COMPUTER...
1616
YOU NEED A COMPUTER? WELL, I'VE GOT THE NEXT BEST THING!
I'D FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT POOR OLD ROBOT MARK... WE LEFT HIM GUARDING THE BUGGY BELOW THE MOUNTAIN...
I HOPE HE'S NOT NURSING A GRIEVANCE IN THAT SENSITIVE METAL HEART OF HIS...
1617
DON'T BE CROSS WITH ME, MARK... I DIDN'T MEAN TO IGNORE YOU...
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I VALUE YOU...
1618
AND NOW WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM UP AT THE PALACE... WE NEED A COMPUTER...
TCHAN!
OH NO! WHAT DID I SAY? MARK'S TAKEN OFFENCE!
1619
HUMANS! PAH!
YOU CAN'T JUST DRIVE AWAY! STOP!

I SOMETIMES WISH THEY HADN'T PROGRAMMED HUMAN EMOTIONS INTO ROBOT MARK...
I'M ALWAYS FORGETTING... AND HURTING HIS COMPUTERISED FEELINGS...
COME ON, MARK, FORGIVE ME! YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU!
IMPHN!
WHAT IS PROBLEM?
OH, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS, MARK... I'M NOT AS CLEVER AS YOU...
BUT THIS ALIEN SPACESHIP HAS LANDED IN THE RUINED PALACE... AND WE NEED YOUR HELP TO REPAIR IT...
HE MAY BE A ROBOT, BUT THEY CERTAINLY EQUIPPED HIM WITH A MALE EGO!
THERE'S THE SPACESHIP, MARK... THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE ARE TRYING TO REPAIR IT...
THEY'RE CALLED THE MORPHOS...
AND WE'RE JUST VERMIN, I SUPPOSE, WHO INFEST THE PALACE?
I THOUGHT AXA WAS DIFFERENT... BUT SHE DESPISES US GROTS LIKE ALL THE REST...
SO I'LL HAVE TO TEACH AXA A LESSON...
NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THIS TRAPDOOR... A SECRET WAY INTO THE PALACE CELLARS...
...AND THE DREAMLAND THE MORPHOS HAVE CONCOCTED TO SHUT OUT REALITY...

WE NEED A SHOWER AFTER WORKING IN THE SPACESHIP...
TRUE, VIKTOR... THE ALIEN DIRT COULD BE DANGEROUS...
CLEAN YOUR PRECIOUS BODIES THEN, MORPHOS...
BUT YOU STILL NEED MASKS TO HIDE YOUR DEFORMITIES... AND I'LL BORROW VIKTOR'S...
1624
IT'S THE MASK AXA ADMIRES, NOT THE REAL VIKTOR BEHIND IT... AND I'LL PROVE THAT TO HER...
AH... THERE YOU ARE...
VIKTOR?
I DIDN'T RECOGNISE YOUR VOICE...
1625
THIS GARDEN OF YOURS IS BEAUTIFUL...
AN ILLUSION, AXA... LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE MORPHO DREAMLAND...
BUT YOU'RE REAL... A LOVELINESS TO BE TOUCHED... FLESH, NOT FANTASY...
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, WEARING MY MASK!
1626
THIS ISN'T VIKTOR?
NO! JUST SOMEONE WHO STOLE MY MASK!
WE'LL SOON FIND OUT WHO HE IS...
THE MUTANT FROM THE RUINED PALACE...
LEADER OF THE GROTS! CALLED RAFF!
1627

I WANTED YOU TO REALISE THAT IT'S THE MASK YOU LOVE, AXA... WHETHER I WEAR IT, OR VIKTOR DOES...
OH, I REALISE IT, ALL RIGHT...
BUT DON'T TALK ABOUT LOVE! THAT'S FOR REAL PEOPLE, NOT FOR SHADOWS!
1628
I'M SICK OF YOUR MASKS! SICK OF THIS MORPHO DREAMLAND AND ITS FALSE ILLUSIONS!
GIVE ME THE REAL WORLD... WITH ALL ITS UGLINESS...
HOW ABOUT THIS, AXA?
1629
COME ON, AXA, GIVE ME A KISS!
I KNOW THAT VOICE... BUT NOT THE FACE...
ANOTHER MASK...
MATT! YOU FOOL!
1630
IT WAS ONLY A JOKE, AXA...
A SICK ONE! ALL THESE MASKS AND ILLUSIONS ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY!
1631
YOUR ROBOT'S STILL WORKING IN THE SPACESHIP...WE NEED OUR SLEEP...
GO BACK TO YOUR DREAM WORLD THEN, MORPHOS...
AT LEAST MARK IS REAL... RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST NUT AND BOLT...

NUTS AND BOLTS! HRMPH! THAT'S ALL I AM TO YOU!
OH, MARK!
I DIDN'T MEAN TO HURT YOU!
A ROBOT WITH EMOTIONS? REMARKABLE!
PERHAPS I COULD SCRUTINISE THIS EXAMPLE OF EARTH TECHNOLOGY MORE CLOSELY?
IF MARK DOESN'T OBJECT...
STAND UNDER THE SPOT-LIGHT, ROBOT... WHILE I ADJUST THE TELE-CAMERA...
AT LEAST SOMEONE TAKES ME SERIOUSLY- EVEN IF HE IS AN ALIEN
MARK CERTAINLY HAS HUMAN EMOTIONS... INCLUDING VANITY!
WHAT'S GOING ON IN HERE, AXA?
THE ALIEN'S TAKING AN INTEREST IN MARK...
WHY?
I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE CREEP INTO THE SPACESHIP JUST NOW...
AND HE WASN'T A MORPHO...
OH NO, IT'S ONE OF THE GROTS! WHAT CAN HE WANT IN HERE?
THE SPACESHIP'S POWER-PACK! HE'S REMOVING IT!

A GROT HAS REMOVED THE POWER-PACK FROM THE ALIEN SPACESHIP...
STOP! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TAKING!
OH YES I DO!
POWER! THE FORCE WHICH DRIVES THIS SHIP TO THE STARS!
1636
IT'S YOU, MARK! SO I HAVEN'T GONE BLIND!
1637
NO LIGHT IN HERE. NO ENERGY. WITH ITS POWER SOURCE REMOVED, THE SPACESHIP IS DEAD ..
AND THE ALIEN, SEALED IN HIS CONTROL CAPSULE, WILL DIE TOO... UNLESS WE CAN RECOVER THAT POWER PACK...
THE GROT'S HEADING FOR HIS LAIR IN THE RUINED PALACE!
1638
WE MUST ALERT THE MORPHOS, AXA!
NO TIME...
IF THE GROT HIDES THE POWER-PACK IN THIS LABYRINTH, WE'LL NEVER FIND IT!
SO WE'VE GOT TO CHASE THE GROT ON OUR OWN!
AND KEEP HIM IN SIGHT...
AT LEAST THE POWER-PACK GLOWS IN THE DARK ...THE FIRST LIGHT IN THIS MAUSOLEUM FOR A CENTURY...
DARKNESS IS KIND TO THE GROTS... IT HIDES THEIR DEFORM-ITIES...
1639

DARKNESS WILL HIDE THE GROTS FROM US, TOO... I HOPE...
OH!
THE MORPHOS ARE RIGHT! YOU'RE VERMIN
STEADY, AXA...THEY CAN'T HELP BEING MUTANTS...
BUT LOOK AT THEM HIDING THEIR EYES... AFRAID OF MY SWORD...
MAYBE IT'S YOUR BODY THEY'RE AFRAID OF... THAT SPLENDID BODY...
LET'S HOPE I CAN SCARE THAT GROT WITH THE POWER-PACK. THEN...
1641
AXA TRIES TO RECOVER THE POWER-PACK STOLEN BY THE GROT FROM THE ALIEN SPACESHIP...
IT'S LIKE TRYING TO CORNER A RAT...
AAH!
THE RAT TRIPPED...
AND LET GO OF THE POWER-PACK...
1642
1643
THE POWER-PACK IS DEADLY. BROKEN, JARRED EVEN. IT COULD RELEASE COSMIC ENERGY.
ENOUGH TO OBLITERATE THIS PALACE. EVEN THE MOUNTAIN IT STANDS ON.
SO I'VE GOT TO STOP IT HITTING THE FLOOR...
THE OLD PEOPLE HAD A SONG... CATCH A FALLING STAR...

GOT IT!
HELL, AXA... YOU JUST SAVED US FROM ANOTHER NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST...
MARK CAN HOLD THE POWER-PACK... HE HAS A METAL HAND. FINGERS THAT LOCK...
AND YOU, GROT... YOU HAVE A HEART AS UGLY AS YOUR BODY...
NO! THAT'S UNJUST! I DIDN'T KNOW THE POWER-PACK WAS SO DEADLY WHEN I STOLE IT!
I SABOTAGED THE SPACESHIP AS A PROTEST! AGAINST THE MORPHOS!
BECAUSE WE GAVE HELP TO THE ALIEN BUT NOT TO YOU? INSOLENT GROT!
VIKTOR! STOP THAT!
YOU MORPHOS ARE AS BAD AS THE GROTS, ANYWAY! YOU'RE ALL MUTANTS, AREN'T YOU?
TWISTED BODIES... TWISTED MINDS...
HAMPH. THE ALIEN IS DYING IN THE CRIPPLED SPACESHIP, REMEMBER?
WE HAVE THE POWER PACK WHICH CAN KEEP HIM ALIVE
OH MARK, I FORGOT!

IT SEEMS TO ME YOU'VE FORGOTTEN A LOT OF THINGS, AXA...
LIKE TOLERANCE... UNDERSTANDING... SYMPATHY FOR THOSE POOR WRETCHED MUTANTS...
WE CAN'T ALL HAVE SPLENDID BODIES, YOU KNOW...
1648
OH MATT ...STOP IT!
1649
I'LL PUT IT RIGHT... ASK VIKTOR TO FORGIVE ME, AND THE GROT LEADER, RAFF, AS WELL...
I'VE BEEN ARROGANT, I KNOW... DESPISING THOSE MUTANTS, WHEN I HAD NO RIGHT TO...
BUT FIRST LET'S REPLACE THAT POWER-PACK IN THE SPACE-SHIP...
POWER ON...
YES! THE SPACESHIP'S ENERGISED AGAIN! BUT HAS THE ALIEN SURVIVED, INSIDE HIS SEALED CONTROL CAPSULE?
YOUR CONCERN IS... WHAT IS THE EARTH WORD FOR THAT CURIOUS EMOTION?.. TOUCHING...
SO YOU ARE ALIVE, IN THERE...
AND GRATEFUL FOR YOUR SYMPATHY AND HELP, EARTH WOMAN...
THE ALIEN'S LUCKIER THAN WE MUTANTS, ISN'T HE?
OH, VIKTOR... DON'T BE ANGRY WITH ME...
I KNOW I'VE BEEN IMPATIENT WITH YOU... HEARTLESS, EVEN...
1651

WE ALL MAKE MISTAKES ... ARMOURED IN OUR OWN EGOS...
BUT IT WAS YOUR MASKS THAT IRRITATED ME ... THE DREAMLAND OF ILLUSIONS YOU MORPHOS HAVE SPUN FOR YOURSELVES IN THE PALACE OF CELLARS...
WE CAN SOON PUT THAT RIGHT, CAN'T WE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, VIKTOR?
COME HERE...
COBWEBS... MILDEW... STONE WALLS... THEY'RE REAL ENOUGH FOR YOU, AREN'T THEY?
NOW I'LL HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS... AND TAKE OFF MY MASK...
THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED, ISN'T IT? TO SEE MY FACE?
WAIT, VIKTOR...
MY REAL FACE... BEHIND THE MASK! LOOK AT IT, AXA...
OH!
I KNEW IT! I HOPED... BUT I KNEW IT! YOU FIND ME REPULSIVE!
VIKTOR...
DON'T LIE TO ME! MY FACE DISGUSTS YOU! AND WHY NOT? IT'S DEFORMED, GROTESQUE!
GIVE ME TIME... I COULD LEARN...
NO!

I DON'T WANT YOUR PITY! AND I CAN'T EXPECT YOU TO LOVE A FACE AS REPULSIVE AS MINE!
BUT WHY... WHY DID YOU TEMPT ME TO TAKE OFF MY MASK?
WE BOTH HAD OUR ILLUSIONS! WHY COULDN'T YOU LET US KEEP THEM?
OH, VIKTOR... WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU?
WHAT HAVE I DONE TO ALL THESE POOR OUTCASTS IN THE HERMITAGE... DEFORMED MUTANTS REJECTED BY THE WORLD OUTSIDE?
I HUMILIATED RAFF... AND NOW HE AND HIS GROTS ARE ATTACKING THE MORPHOS AND THE ALIEN SPACESHIP...
MATT! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
ARE YOU ASKING ME?
YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE LOVELY BODY, AXA... AND IT'S DRIVEN THESE POOR UGLY INMATES CRAZY...
YOU'VE MADE THEM HATE THEMSELVES... AS WELL AS EACH OTHER...
VIKTOR! RAFF! STOP FIGHTING! YOU SHOULD BE FRIENDS, NOT ENEMIES!
AXA'S RIGHT! WE'RE ALL MUTANTS... MASKED OR UNMASKED!
MORPHOS AND GROTS, WE'RE ALL OUTCASTS!
-AND NOW I KNOW WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT!

WHAT DID VIKTOR MEAN? WHY IS HE RUNNING TO THE SPACESHIP?
DON'T ASK ME... YOU'RE THE ONE WITH ALL THE ANSWERS, AXA...
THEY'RE BOTH BITTER...AND MAYBE THEY'VE A RIGHT TO BE...

DON'T HATE ME, VIKTOR...
IT'S MYSELF I HATE! AND THIS ROTTEN WORLD THAT MADE ME A MUTANT!
I CAN'T DESTROY THE WHOLE WORLD... BUT DESTROYING THIS CORNER OF IT WILL BE ENOUGH...
NO! DON'T TOUCH THAT POWER-PACK!

YOU CAN'T WIPE THEM ALL OUT, MORPHOS AND GROTS, THE ALIEN IN THIS SPACE-SHIP...
WHY NOT? WE'RE ALL OUTCASTS!
BUT I'M NOT! AND YOU NEEDN'T BE, EITHER!

SO YOU'RE A MUTANT! AND THE WORLD'S REJECTED YOU!
BUT THIS EARTH IS JUST ONE WORLD IN A WHOLE UNIVERSE!
AND OUT THERE IN SPACE, YOU MIGHT FIND ACCEPTANCE!
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, AXA?

RAFF SAID I HAD ALL THE ANSWERS... WELL, MAYBE I HAVE ONE...
AND IT COULD BE AN ANSWER TO VIKTOR'S PROBLEM...
WATCH HIM, WILL YOU? DON'T LET HIM TOUCH THAT POWER-PACK AND BLOW US ALL UP...
1664
1665
SPEAK TO THE ALIEN...
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, AXA?
YOU EARTH PEOPLE HAVE HELPED ME, WOMAN! HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
WHEN YOUR SHIP IS REPAIRED, YOU'LL NAVIGATE IT BACK TO YOUR OWN PLANET... BUT WON'T YOU NEED A CREW?
AXA PUTS A VITAL QUESTION TO THE ALIEN COMMANDER OF THE SPACE-SHIP...
THE PROBLEM HAD OCCURRED TO ME, EARTH WOMAN...
NAVIGATING THIS SHIP BACK TO MY OWN PLANET, ALONE, WILL BE DIFFICULT. BUT WHO WOULD CREW FOR ME?
1666
WHY NOT VIKTOR AND HIS MORPHOS?
THESE OUTCAST EARTH MEN WOULD COME WITH ME, ACROSS SPACE, TO AN ALIEN PLANET?
WELL, VIKTOR?
IT'S A... FANTASTIC IDEA!
BUT OUR OWN WORLD HAS REJECTED US... WHY SHOULDN'T WE EMIGRATE TO ANOTHER?
1667

SO VIKTOR AND HIS MORPHOS WILL CREW THE SPACESHIP TO ANOTHER PLANET... BUT WHAT ABOUT US GROTS ?
THIS PALACE WILL BE YOURS... THE WORKSHOPS OF THE MORPHOS ... A CHANCE FOR YOU TO STEP OUT OF THE SHADOWS...
SHALL WE PUT IT TO OUR PEOPLE, RAFF ?
AGREED!
1668
STOP FIGHTING, MORPHOS AND GROTS! WE HAVE A FUTURE NOW, ALL OF US, THE MASKED AND THE UNMASKED!
THE MORPHOS OUT IN SPACE! THE GROTS HERE IN THE PALACE! TELL THEM, AXA!
1669
VIKTOR AND ANY MORPHOS WHO VOLUNTEER WILL CREW THE ALIEN SPACESHIP BACK TO ITS OWN PLANET...
SO THE MORPHOS WILL EMIGRATE TO SPACE... AND THE GROTS WILL TAKE OVER THEIR QUARTERS IN THE PALACE...
A NEW LIFE FOR US!
FOR US, TOO!
1670
RAFF WAS RIGHT, AXA...YOU DO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS!
IT WAS I WHO DISRUPTED THIS OUTCAST COMMUNITY IN THE RUINED PALACE...
SO IT WAS UP TO ME TO FIND A NEW WAY OF LIFE FOR THE MUTANTS...
BUT YOU STILL HAVE DOUBTS, AXA ?
ONE, YES... I'LL SETTLE IT TOMORROW...
1671

BEFORE DAWN, NEXT MORNING...
AXA AND HER DOUBTS! SHE COULDN'T WAIT TILL DAYLIGHT!
WILL THE MORPHOS SETTLE DOWN...ON A STRANGE PLANET... OUT THERE IN SPACE...
ONLY ONE MAN...OR RATHER ALIEN...CAN TELL ME...
1672
I READ YOUR THOUGHTS, EARTH WOMAN...YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE MORPHO EMIGRANTS...
THEY'VE SUFFERED SO MUCH HERE ON THEIR OWN PLANET... AS MUTANTS REJECTED BECAUSE OF THEIR DEFORMITIES...
THEY WILL BE ACCEPTED ON MY PLANET...LET ME SHOW YOU WHY...
1673
YOU'RE MOVING TOWARDS THE CAMERA?
YES... I WILL SHOW YOU MY FACE...
THE FACE OF AN ALIEN ... A LIFEFORM SHAPED IN ANOTHER PLANET, IN ANOTHER GALAXY...
OH, NO! BUT YOU'RE AS BEAUTIFUL AS THE MORPHOS ARE UGLY!
1674
IF EVERYONE ON YOUR PLANET IS AS BEAUTIFUL AS YOU, THE MORPHOS ARE DOOMED!
THEY'RE MUTANTS! HIDEOUSLY DEFORMED! YOUR PEOPLE WILL LOATHE AND DESPISE THEM!
1675
OH NO...WE HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH THE MORPHOS THAN YOU THINK...

THAT BEAUTIFUL FACE OF YOURS... IT'S A MASK!

YOU SAW, VIKTOR? YOU HEARD?
EVERY-THING, AXA...

LIKE US, THE ALIENS BELIEVE IN ILLUSION!
I THINK WE SHALL FEEL AT HOME ON THAT PLANET OF THEIRS!

SO VIKTOR AND HIS MORPHO EMIGRANTS ARE OFF TO A NEW HOME ON ANOTHER PLANET IN SPACE...
WHERE BEAUTY AND UGLINESS ARE IRRELEVANT...ONLY A SHADOW BEHIND A MASK...

DON'T YOU WISH YOU WERE GOING WITH THEM, AXA?
NO... MY OWN WORLD IS WONDERFUL ENOUGH FOR ME...